

This testimony is in reference to Bills 5067 and 6121 which I support:

I live at 16 North St. in Ridgefield CT. This is a street bounded on one side by a historic (the town's settlers are buried there) cemetery, with lovely trees and stone walls. On the other side of the road are 1500 sq. ft. modest homes, mostly 1960's ranches and some 1920's farmhouses. Most properties are 1/3 to 1/12 acre. In 2012, one of the ranches sold. The lot is .41 acre. A builder called Ridgefield Modular Homes purchased it. The seller was under the impression he would tear the existing home down and put up a modular.

Instead, the builder submitted a proposal for an 11 unit affordable project on .41 acre. The buildings were 4 stories high and crammed onto the lot, with no permeable surface remaining. The building plan has since been reduced to 6 units but the lot is in a low lying area adjacent to wetlands on the town maps. The drainage has been questioned and shown to be inadequate, given the water table and lack of permeable surface. Also, the density of the units on the tiny parcel, make for living conditions little better than storage units for humans. Is this responsible affordable housing?

I don't object to affordable housing, but placing projects in a residential area is like putting a skyscraper next to farmland. It is so incongruous with the setting that one person at the public hearing called it the most "gross and vulgar" project he has seen. Others called it an "assault on the neighborhood." Who is responsible for the devaluation of neighbors properties when a 4 story apartment complex like this moves into a quiet residential area? Who is responsible for the crammed conditions of the residents of a project like this? Is it the builder? Is it the P & Z committee? Is it the town of Ridgefield? Or is it the 8-30G state statute?

I believe the 8-30G statute needs to be revised. I fully support a revision of this statute to include certain "zones" in towns with populations under 25,000. I also support height and density restrictions on projects in towns. As it stands, P&Z have their hands tied. Connecticut has many quaint New England towns which attract lots of tourists and bring money to the communities and the state. The character of these towns needs to be protected against rampant 8-30G projects which have nothing to do with affordable housing and EVERYTHING to do with greedy builders, who are abusing the statute for their own profit. Let's protect the heritage of our towns by revising the 8-30G statute.